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A DISCOURSE
UPON
THE HISTORY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF
THE FIRST PARISH IN CARLISLE,
MASSACHUSETTS.

DELIVERED IN THE FIRST PARISH CHURCH, CARLISLE, MASS.,
ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1870.

BY REV. JAMES J. TWISS.

LOWELL:
SLOVE, BACHELLER & LIVINGSTON, PRINTERS, No. 18 JACKSON ST., FISKE'S BLOCK.
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YRABLL III
SBRBOD: TO

DISCOURSE.

"Woman, believe me; the hour cometh, when ye shall neither worship in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. . . . But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth."—*JOHN* iv: 21—23.

IN the spirit of these words the Pilgrim fathers of New England came to these shores, more than two centuries ago. Denied freedom of speech, and persecuted for opinion's sake, they fled from their native land, and found a home and country on this continent. They knew that God was not necessarily worshipped, exclusively, in any one place; that no longer at Mount Gerizim or in Jerusalem must the devout believer offer the expression of his reverence and love; but that wheresoever the sincere worshipper should signify, in spirit and in truth, his desire to adore God, there would God be accessible to him.

And our fathers did not come to this land to promote their material welfare. At least, they were sure that a superstructure of temporal prosperity, to be permanent, must rest upon the foundation of religion. And so the minister was one of the colony, as essentially so, as the farmer, or the mechanic, or the doctor. The church was one of the first institutions established in the community or town. Indeed, in a certain sense, it comprehended all others; for the sanction and support of the minister and church were necessary to the success of any enterprise. Whatever they condemned, was generally short-lived. Whatever they approved was pretty sure to succeed.

The motive, then, which, as a general thing, impelled our Pilgrim fathers to cross the ocean and build here a home, was the desire "to secure a place to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences, free from the molestations and persecutions they had experienced in England; free, too, from the uncongenial surroundings, the irregular habits of life, the strange and uncouth language, the licentiousness of youth, the manifold

temptations, and the neglect of the observance of the Lord's day as a Sabbath, which they had so lamented in Holland." They were not mere adventurers. They did not come to acquire wealth, or social, or political distinction. They came in obedience to the dictates of the Christian religion, and by the direction of Divine Providence, to build here a Christian Church, which should embody more of Christ's truth than any then known to the world, and, without being aware of it, to prepare for a more ample and varied application of this truth among men.

Very truly, therefore, does another say: "We can not be too often reminded that it was the Christian religion which effected the first permanent settlement in New England. All other motives had failed. Commerce, the fisheries, the hope of discovering mines, the ambition of founding colonies, all had been tried, and all had failed. But the Pilgrims asked of God, and he gave them the heathen for their inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for their possession."

Whoever reads the history of New England will observe that this truth has been confirmed in the settlement of most, if not all the older towns, the date of which, reaches back a century or more. It will be found that the church was the nucleus around which clustered the new community, and for the existence of which the new community had become an organized body. If the church did not anticipate the town; neither did the town anticipate the church. The existence of the former was never conceived save as being the location of the latter. The establishment of the two was almost simultaneous.

Such, then, were the circumstances under which, substantially, the parish here represented to-day came into existence, one hundred and twenty years ago. I say substantially the parish, for the first meeting-house for public worship ever erected in this town, was built in 1760 or '61, and was placed very near the spot occupied by the temple in which we are now assembled.

One of your older citizens, himself more familiar with the early history of the town than most of us, caused to be printed in the local newspaper, little less than one year since, a statement of a few facts of which I very gratefully avail myself, and from which it appears that "on the first day of July, 1758, Timothy Wilkins, of Concord, in the County of Middlesex, and His Majesty's Province of Massachusetts Bay, moved thereunto, as he quaintly informs us, by 'the love and regard he had

for the public worship of God, and the good of his neighbors and fellow-creatures,' deeded and conveyed to John Green and eleven others of Concord, Thomas Spalding and five others of Chelmsford, and James Nickles of Billerica, a lot of land, for the 'Convenancy of building a meeting-house for the public worship of God, and other public uses.' This land is the space surrounding this Church, including that which it stands on, and what is called, 'the Common.'"

Here, then, the first Christian church, in what was afterwards Carlisle, but then Concord, was erected. Its dimensions were humble, but ample enough for the number of those who desired, from week to week, to gather therein.

The ostensible purpose of building a new church, and establishing a new religious society in this locality, was hinted at by the grantor of the land referred to. With himself and his neighbors there was a feeling that the churches at Concord, at Chelmsford, at Billerica and at Acton, were so remote as to occasion great inconvenience to those who desired to attend divine service from this region. But before this time, as appears from the records, strenuous but unsuccessful efforts had been made to accomplish the same result.

In 1740 the subject of organizing a new town from parts of Concord, Billerica, Chelmsford and Acton, began to be agitated, and was continued from time to time, the aforesaid towns, however, refusing to give their consent, until 1754, when Concord allowed a portion of her own territory, on the northern boundary, to be constituted a district, called Carlisle. Greater convenience for attending public religious worship was the reason assigned for this movement.

But the way seemed not to be free from difficulties even though the mother-town had granted the desire of her importunate and restless child; for after a three years' struggle to agree upon a location for a church, holding more than twenty district meetings, besides calling in the aid of several committees, and finally invoking the assistance of the General Court, the people became discouraged, petitioned to be, and were, restored once more to the maternal embrace.

As the difficulty to select a location for a church would seem to have been the rock on which the efforts of the people to establish a new parish were wrecked, the danger was subsequently avoided by the generous-hearted Wilkins, who deeded to certain men, as trustees, a tract of land which henceforth for a

century—and may I not say, for all time to come?—was to be the spot whereon should stand a temple dedicated to the worship of God.

The first church erected in this town was not only humble in dimensions but “rude in appearance.” It was but a rough-boarded structure, destitute of clapboards, innocent of paint, and furnished only with benches for seats, in which condition it remained for twenty years. And yet, religious services were held in it constantly on Sundays during all this time, though there was no settled pastor—not even an organized church. “Often,” it is said, “did its rude walls resound to the bold, zealous, impassioned and enthusiastic words of Rev. Daniel Bliss, of Concord, one of the most distinguished clergymen of his day. And once in August, 1764, the celebrated Whitfield, from its south doorsteps, preached to an audience far too large to be accommodated within. And from its portals, as tradition declares, on the morning of the 19th of April, 1775, nineteen men, called together from the neighboring hamlets by the drum of Timothy Wilkins and the horn of James Kemp, started for Concord, under the direction of Lieut. James Russell and Samuel Heald, to join in the fight at the old North Bridge, and to pursue the retreating foe back to Boston.”

About the time this (the first) church was erected, the peace of the New England churches began to be disturbed by the views and feelings which Mr. Whitfield, the eloquent divine who had then recently arrived from England, caused very widely to prevail.

For several years the work of devising and adopting a uniform system of church government and discipline throughout New England, had engaged the attention of the ministers and people. And “this work,” says the historian of Chelmsford, Rev. Wilkes Allen, “had just been accomplished by the wisdom and perseverance of the fathers of the New England churches, which had enjoyed but a short peace, when a host of mushroom exhorters and lay preachers, who owed their origin to Mr. Whitfield, sprung up and made inroads upon the peace and order of Christian societies and churches. From his (Mr. Whitfield’s) example, powerful eloquence, and inflammatory zeal, many settled ministers were induced to play the Bishop in another’s diocess; and many illiterate persons to assume the office of itinerating preachers.”

The church in Chelmsford seems to have been specially disturbed by these influences. “Many members,” it is said, “were

seduced from the simplicity and order of the gospel, to the great grief of their brethren and of their stated pastor," Rev. Mr. Bridge. At one time "no less than fifteen persons were called before the church to answer to the charge of disorderly conduct and violation of covenant engagements, in going after vagrant preachers and lay exhorters." And it was of a number of this class of persons who requested to be dismissed from the Chelmsford church, that they might unite with others in forming a church in Carlisle, that Mr. Bridge declared: "Twenty years have I been grieved with that generation. I give my most hearty consent to their dismissal."

It would seem that those who constituted the original members of this parish, or religious association of men and women—those who worshipped for twenty years in the first church in this town—sympathized largely with the views and policy of Mr. Whitfield, between whom and Rev. Mr. Bliss, of Concord, there was also, I infer, an agreement of opinion.

Mr. Whitfield, while in college at Oxford, England, united with John Wesley, the father of Methodism, and with several other students, in the formation of a society which had for its purpose, not so much the prosecution of their studies as the promotion of their religious improvement, Wesley and Whitfield especially being impatient with the religious indifference and coldness of the established church. To accomplish the end in view, the young men lived by rule and held frequent meetings for devotional purposes, thus exciting the ridicule of their fellow-students, and at length receiving the name of Methodists.

This society came finally to number about fifteen members, and religion soon constituted the sole business of their meetings. They regularly visited the prisoners and the sick, and fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays. Of course their religious zeal was increased, and they grew more and more impatient with the indifference of the church to which they belonged, until they practically withdrew themselves from that communion. Whitfield and Wesley soon became popular preachers with the masses, and drew crowds wherever they went.

In the course of time Whitfield, having been denied the use of pulpits in which he had before preached, resorted to the open air, and thus introduced field-preaching, addressing many thousands with great success. Wesley did not at first approve of the new method, but finally acquiesced, and the two men produced a wonderful sensation.

But they were not destined to continue together. In 1740, a separation took place between them, Mr. Whitfield having become a decided and ardent Calvinist; Mr. Wesley an equally warm supporter of Armenian doctrines.

Mr. Whitfield continued to preach to immense crowds of people, who were greatly wrought upon by his eloquence, fervor and novel ideas concerning personal religion. So far from restraining the enthusiasm awakened by his eloquence among the people, he encouraged it, and thus condemned the more moderate and reserved methods practiced by other religious sects. Mr. Whitfield journeyed back and forth between England and America several times during his life.

Somewhere about 1757 he landed in Boston, and commenced to travel and preach throughout New England. And it was not far from this time, I infer, that the agitation was at its height which so disturbed the Chelmsford church, and probably affected more or less other churches in this region. The advocates of the new and exciting methods of religious worship were styled New Lights; and the people in this vicinity seemed to have been early infected with the mania.

That all those who originally worshipped in the humble First Church of this town were dissatisfied with the administration of the Gospel in the several churches to which they previously belonged, is not certain. Indeed, such could not have been the case; for at that time the pastor of the Concord church, Rev. Mr. Bliss, was, as I understand, in full sympathy with Mr. Whitfield, and of course none of his people who shared the same sentiments would desire to withdraw from his fold because they failed to be edified by his ministry. But this was the cause of the desire to withdraw from the Chelmsford church on the part of "that generation" which had, for twenty years, so deeply grieved the soul of good Mr. Bridge, the pastor. They claimed that they were not edified by Mr. Bridge's ministry, and desired to unite with other and kindred spirits, in establishing a church in Carlisle.

Mr. Bridge regarded with decided aversion the methods of the so-called New Lights, and probably did not fail to express his feelings with marked emphasis. Besides, so far as the people that constituted the original parish in this town sympathized with Mr. Whitfield and Mr. Bliss, the Concord minister, in theological views, they were Calvinists. So that probably the religious services that were held in the First Church in this town,

for the first twenty years after it was erected, were chiefly Calvinistic in doctrine. Therefore, it is also probable that the malcontents of the Chelmsford church were Calvinistic in doctrine; and this disturbed Mr. Bridge quite as much as did the new forms and methods of religious worship introduced by Whitfield and his compeers; for the historian of Chelmsford informs us that Mr. Bridge's aversion towards Calvinists, or Hopkinsians, was so intense that he could hardly treat them with civility when he met them.

The present generation, in this vicinity, can have but a faint idea of the excitement that attended the new forms of worship to which I have referred. A description of the manner of the preaching of Mr. Bliss, the Concord minister, and its effect, has been handed to me, which is said to have originally appeared in the *Boston Evening Post*, March 14, 1743, and to have been written by one who heard him. "He began," says the writer, "in low, moderate strains, and went on for sometime in the same manner; but towards the close of his sermon he began to raise his voice and to use many extravagant gestures; and then began a considerable groaning amongst his auditors, perceiving which, he raised his voice still higher, and the congregation was in the utmost confusion. Some were crying out in the most doleful accents, some howling, some singing, others laughing, and Mr. Bliss still roaring at them to come to Christ, they answering, 'I will,' 'I will,' 'I am coming,' 'I am coming.'"

We can well imagine, perhaps, how such an exciting, boisterous, undignified mode of worship would impress many of the staid, circumspect and conservative of our fathers, who believed in letting their moderation be known unto all men.

Nevertheless, for twenty years the First Church in this town was occupied by those who deemed it their privilege to cherish and express such convictions of religious truth, and in that way as to them seemed to be approved of God. And while their views of doctrine, and their methods of worship may not, in all respects, commend themselves to the judgment of their descendants, we may not doubt their sincerity in desiring to become the true disciples of their Divine Master.

It is probable that religious services were conducted in the First Church during the first twenty years after its erection, chiefly by those persons whom Mr. Allen, the Chelmsford historian, denominates "mushroom exhorters and lay preachers."

At length, however, the efforts of the people to obtain an act from the Legislature, incorporating them into a town, having been successful, the time had arrived for the partially finished church edifice to pass into the hands of new proprietors; and accordingly the town, by some act of the trustees not of record, received from them (they having held it till now) the title to the land and the building. This occurred in 1780, the year in which the town was incorporated; and it was in this church that the first town meeting was held.

From this period there began to be apparent a new aspect of things. The people were no longer citizens of several different municipalities, but they were fellow-townsmen, having the same interest in the material, social, intellectual and spiritual welfare of themselves and their descendants. All things must now be surely done "decently and in order," however irregular may have been past proceedings in respect of religious and civil affairs.

It might have been expected that but little time would elapse before a Christian church would be established, since, in the language of the day, a "*meeting-house*," however incomplete, had been placed in possession of the newly incorporated town. Therefore we learn that on the 28th of February, 1781, the First Congregational Church of Carlisle was duly established, and that on the 7th of November, succeeding, Rev. Paul Litchfield, the first minister of the town, was ordained.

And these services occurred in the first church edifice, which had been recently clapboarded, painted and twenty-four pews put in on the lower floor. Subsequently, "in 1793, further improvements were made, including the erection of a pulpit, and nineteen pews, which were placed in the gallery." "And here for the first thirty years of his long ministry," to quote the language of the friend already referred to, "were Mr. Litchfield's earnest words of reproof, warning and encouragement echoed from the quaint old sounding-board suspended over the pulpit."

In those days it was customary to settle a minister for life. And so another custom prevailed which seemed to belong to, or was a part of, the rule of life-settlements. Hence we learn that when Mr. Litchfield was called to be the minister of the town, it was stipulated that he should receive a salary of £80 per *annum*, and in addition to that £150 as a settlement, all in silver money. And this custom of giving the new minister, at the commencement of his term of service, settled, as it was supposed, for life, a

sum of money, or other property exclusive of his salary, was as general as the rule of life-settlements. The amount thus granted varied of course according to circumstances. I suppose that £150 in Mr. Litchfield's day might have amounted to a sum not far from \$500 of our money. And as the purchasing power of a dollar was much greater then than now, the "settlement" of Mr. Litchfield may be considered as having been quite generous. In addition to the £80 salary in silver money, it was also stipulated that the minister should receive twenty-six cords of wood annually, and that one horse and two cows should be maintained for him until he was so situated as to maintain them himself, which, at the expiration of three years, having purchased a farm, he was able to do.

Mr. Litchfield was ordained November 7, 1781. The Ecclesiastical Council on the occasion was constituted of pastors and delegates from the churches in Billerica, Bedford, Concord, Acton, Ashby, Franklin (the eminent Dr. Emmons was the pastor of that church), Situate, Abington, Medway, North Church (Newburyport), Second Church in Salem—twelve in all. Rev. Samuel Spring, of Newburyport, preached the ordination sermon.

It seems a little singular that the churches in Chelmsford, in Westford and in Littleton were not represented on this occasion. It is to be presumed that they were not invited. And if so, we can imagine the reason in the case of the Chelmsford church, for I suppose the members of the First Congregational Church of Carlisle followed in the line of doctrine those who erected and worshipped in the old first meeting-house, before the incorporation of the town. And that, as I have said, was Calvinism or Hopkinsianism. A church representing such theological views would not, therefore, be likely to enjoy the sympathy of the Chelmsford pastor, Rev. Mr. Bridge, notwithstanding several of the members of his own church had expressed a desire to be dismissed, that they might help constitute the new church in Carlisle. Indeed, they had left his communion because he did not believe and teach Calvinism, or Hopkinsianism. It was not probable, therefore, that he would be invited to help ordain a man who would be selected by such a church as their pastor. And that Mr. Litchfield was a Calvinist is conceded. He coincided in all points, it is said, with the system of theology then known as Hopkinsianism—a form of the most rigid Calvinism, as taught by Dr. Samuel Hopkins, who preached for many years in Newport, R. I.

The church commenced with ten men and twenty-four women, thirteen of whom had previously belonged to the church in Concord. I have not had the means of learning by how many this number was increased by profession or by letter before the division took place in the church, which occurred subsequently to Mr. Litchfield's death. I suppose the church could never have been called large, though undoubtedly earnest in the work of Christian culture and the promotion of the spread of what the members regarded as Christian theology. They were interested, we may believe, in the services of their pastor, Mr. Litchfield, who, it is said, was considered by his contemporaries a deep thinker and a strong controversialist. His friend, Dr. Church, of Pelham, N. H., who knew him well, and fully sympathized in his rigid theological opinions, declared in a sermon delivered at the funeral of Mr. Litchfield, that "he possessed a strong discriminating mind, and was fond of deep thought; that the ablest works on theology were his favorite study; that his views of the essential doctrines of the Bible were distinct and well arranged in his mind; and that he had the talent of presenting these doctrines with plainness and force. Who," continued Dr. Church, "could hear him without knowing the leading sentiments of his creed? When did he give an uncertain sound? How much did his devotional discussions enforce his exhortations to repent, to believe in Christ and obey the divine command?"

This testimony of his life-long friend and clerical brother, to the sincerity and plainness of Mr. Litchfield's communications from the pulpit, would seem to confirm the statement of a hearer who was a constant attendant upon his ministry, and who said that "he seldom delivered a sermon in which he did not laud Calvinism, Hopkinsianism and condemn Antinomianism, Arminianism and Unitarianism." It is said that he believed in a millennium and that it would take place, or commence, about 1866.

Up to the 26th of May, 1810, there was no convenience for suspending a bell in connection with the church, and a project for building a belfry and procuring a bell had for some time been agitated by the people. But on the day mentioned the church was struck by lightning and entirely consumed.

"Ten days after the destruction of the old church, a town-meeting was held on the common, at which it was voted to proceed without delay, to adopt the necessary preliminary measures for erecting a meeting-house."

Subsequently the necessary funds were provided, the location agreed upon, and a building committee, entrusted with full powers, was chosen. That committee was composed of Asa Parlin, Thomas Heald and Nathan Green, Jr. The result of those efforts was the religious temple in which we are now assembled. As is known, originally the audience-room of this church included the entire space of the inside of the house; that is, what is now called Union Hall, beneath this room, was the lower floor of the church, containing forty-four pews, while the gallery, which I suppose was on a level with the floor of this room, and extended around three sides of the building, contained sixteen pews, one of which on the left hand side, behind the door, being reserved for the benefit of colored people, which shows that the fathers were not entirely free from what has sometimes been called "colorphobia." This church was dedicated on the second Sunday in December, 1811, the religious services being conducted by the pastor, Rev. Mr. Litchfield.

In 1852 this church was remodeled within and thoroughly repaired without. A floor was laid across, at the height of the galleries, from side to side, which left the hall below and this room above, an improvement which has commended itself to the judgment and convenience of the parish, and village, and town. The cost of these improvements was, I am told, about \$1200, which was earned and solicited by the "Ladies' Union," an association of ladies connected with the parish. The persons who acted as a committee to obtain these subscriptions were Mrs. Irene G. Wheat, Mrs. B. F. Heald and Mrs. Fanny Taylor and others.

In 1868 the old spire which, from its exposure to the winds and storms of nearly sixty years, "was thought unsafe, and the present symmetrical one was substituted." Last year, the outside of the church was very thoroughly re-painted; and now there are few places of religious worship in the country towns which present a more comely and stately appearance than does this old and revered temple, built nearly seventy years ago.

The first indication of any difference of religious sentiment among the members of the parish, or the citizens of the town, was observed when arrangements came to be made for the funeral of Mr. Litchfield, who died in November, 1827. A committee appointed by the town desired that Rev. Dr. Ripley, of Concord, Rev. Messrs. Allen, of Chelmsford, and Whitman, of Billerica, might be invited to take part in the funeral services;

but Deacon Jacobs and those whom he represented objected, because they felt, it was said, that if those ministers were invited they would necessarily expect to occupy and speak from the pulpit, which those who sympathized with Mr. Litchfield's theological views were unwilling to sanction, as Messrs. Ripley, Allen and Whitman were pronounced Unitarians. I suppose it may have been thought also, that if Mr. Litchfield had made the arrangements himself for his own funeral before his death, he would have excluded the Unitarian ministers. A majority of the town, however, seemed to dissent from the ground taken by Deacon Jacobs and those whom he represented. But if I am correct in my apprehension, the latter party succeeded in carrying out their plans concerning the funeral arrangements. Nevertheless, it caused a wound which subsequently was irritated by a vote of the majority of the members of the church as against the citizens of the town, to take the custody of the church property out of the hands of Deacon Green, who sympathized with the town, and placing it in possession of Deacon Jacobs.

On December 31, 1827, almost immediately after the death of Mr. Litchfield, the town chose a committee to procure supplies for the pulpit. That committee consisted of one member of the church and two persons outside the church, who were not in sympathy with the extreme Calvinistic, Hopkinsian theological views of at least a majority of the church, but were regarded as being liberal or Unitarian in their sentiments. Nevertheless, the two liberals on the committee for the supply of the pulpit, deferred to the wishes of the one member of the church, and so-called Orthodox ministers were therefore employed from Sunday to Sunday during the year. And the same committee were chosen the following year, and the same class of ministers was employed in the same way as those of the previous year, up to June 9th, when the church extended a call to Rev. Joseph Clary. Mr. Clary fully sympathized with the late Mr. Litchfield in his theological views, but was considered an indifferent preacher. For these or some other reasons the town, by a vote of twenty yeas to fifty-one nays, non-concurred with the church in this call. And this, I suppose, was the signal for an emphatic protest by the majority of the church against the now obviously growing opposite religious sentiments among the majority of the parish or town, which protest took the form of a withdrawal from the parish by the method of, as it was called, "signing off"—being released by their own request from all pecuniary obligations to

support religious worship in this town, and also disconnecting themselves from the church, after which they united with the so-called Orthodox Church and Society in Concord.

As it has been said: "In the earlier period of New England Congregationalism, the church as distinct from the assembly of worshippers—or the parish or town, as the case might be—took the lead in all matters pertaining to public worship, the call and settlement of pastors, the determination of the conditions of communion, the use of ordinances, and indeed pretty much everything but the raising and appropriation of money."

The parish or town did, however, exercise its prerogative when it chose to do so, of dissenting from the action of the church, especially in calling and deciding the amount of the settlement and salary of a pastor. Thus this town, or the first parish, voted not to concur with the church in calling Rev. Mr. Clary to be its pastor, whereupon the dissatisfied members of the church seceded.

Subsequently they petitioned for the use of the church in which to hold religious services when not in use by the town, but the town was disinclined to grant the request, or at least it does not appear that the town acted upon the subject.

On the 6th of June, 1829, the town voted to call Rev. Ephraim Randall to be the pastor; but before the call was communicated to him he had accepted one extended to him from Westford.

On the 28th of December, 1829, the parish chose a committee to petition the General Court for an act of incorporation; but upon inquiry it was found to be unnecessary—that the parish or society would be a legal body whenever it should be disposed to sever its connection with the town and manage all its affairs within itself; and so the subject was never carried to the Legislature.

A committee was also chosen at this time (at a meeting, I suppose, of the parish which of course included the citizens of the town, church members and others) to obtain the church records, and consider what should be done concerning Deacon Jacobs's assertion that he had none—that is, had no church records in his possession. Deacon Jacobs, however, subsequently produced the church records in town-meeting, but in a mutilated condition; whereupon it was voted to take no further action in the matter. In 1829, November 22nd, it was unanimously voted by the parish to give Rev. Stephen Hull a call, the contract

between himself and the parish to be annulled by either party upon giving six months' notice to that effect. The call was accepted, and the installation occurred December 29th succeeding. Rev. Dr. Ripley, of Concord, presided at the council, and Rev. Dr. Eaton, of Boxford, preached the sermon. This union of pastor and people continued until November 29, 1834, when the parish gave the required six months' notice that it desired to annul the contract with Mr. Hull, whose term of service, therefore, expired on the first day of June, 1835. Rev. Mr. Capron then supplied the pulpit for several months, when Mr. George W. Stacy received and accepted a call to become the pastor, and was ordained May 4th, 1836. Rev. Dr. Ripley, of Concord, presided over the council, and Rev. Adin Ballou, of Mendon, preached the sermon. He was dismissed at his own request, April 18, 1839, and now resides in Milford, Mass.

Mr. Stacy was the last minister ordained or installed over this parish, all others who have stately preached here being simply acting pastors, whose engagements were renewed annually. Rev. J. T. Powers occupied the pulpit during eight years, but at two different periods of time. He was succeeded at the close of his first term of preaching service by Rev. J. T. Smith, now of Tyngsboro'. Other ministers have supplied the pulpit for various periods of time—some for a few months, others for a brief period of years. The present speaker has preached from this pulpit on Sunday afternoons for a little less than three years.

The parish was organized as a separate body from the town on March 5, 1832. There are now living but five of the original members—William Green, William Farrar, Paul Forbush, B. F. Heald and Stephen Taylor. Dr. John Nelson was the first parish clerk, B. F. Heald succeeded him the next year, and continued to hold the office, with the exception of five or six years till 1877. William Green has held the office of treasurer of the parish for over twenty years.

The original members of the First Church and parish of this town have long since gone to their heavenly rest, and the ardent feelings and earnest expressions of religious and theological zeal have been succeeded by a greater degree of mutual forbearance and a warmer regard for fraternal intercourse, and a tendency to place less stress on speculative opinions and more emphasis on right living and true Christian character everywhere in our land. The unprofitable and unpleasant theological controversies of a hundred and even of fifty years ago, have given place to a

broader style of thought, a more friendly comparison of views, and a wonderful union of spirit among all religious sects. Mr. Litchfield believed that the millennium would begin in 1866. I think it began before that time in the religious world, for some of the fiercest theological lions have, for a long time, comparatively, been lying down in peace with Christian lambs in this country and in Europe. Years ago, before I removed from Lowell, I heard one of the leading Calvinist Baptist ministers of this State publicly declare that he believed there were just as good Christians inside the Unitarian and Universalist churches as could be found anywhere. True he added, that he thought they were Christians in spite of their religious doctrines; not as a result of them. Could the devoted fathers of old have thought the same of the Unitarian church fifty years ago, Dr. Ripley and his brethren had been welcomed to the funeral of the venerable and honored first minister of Carlisle. I will be grateful, however, that such a blessed change has finally been wrought, and pray that the good work may go on.

I must not omit to mention good old Deacon Green, of most blessed memory, whom, I am assured, no one could know without entertaining for him the deepest veneration and love. His character is well delineated, it is said, in the lines on his tombstone, selected by Rev. Mr. Stacy, his pastor, and are as follows:

"To sect or party his large soul
Disdained to be confined;
The good he loved of every name,
And prayed for all mankind."

He held the office of deacon before, and he still remained within its fold after, the division in the church occurred, until he was called to join the church above.

Among the faithful workers in the parish in the past was Capt. Thomas Green, who not only remembered it in his last will and testament, but whose mantle has fallen upon those who worthily wear it with his name, in the varied interests of this parish he so loved. And there were Cyrus Heald, and Benjamin Barret, and Thomas Heald, and James W. Wilkins, and Calvin Heald, who were also faithful, and left a record which should be an inspiration to those who are now on the field of action.

I have referred to the religious, theological and professional character of the first minister of this town. Of the personal appearance of Mr. Litchfield in old age, James S. Russell, teacher

of mathematics in the Lowell High School, says: "He was tall, long-limbed, broad but thin chested, with silver hair combed back and hanging gracefully down over his coat-collar. He dressed in a black, broad-skirted, curve-waisted coat, with ministerial bands or ruffles. He wore a long vest and knee-breeches, with knee-buckles and long black silk hose. His shoes were large, and were also adorned with silver buckles, three inches square; and crowning all this costume, was a three-cornered hat." We can imagine with what old-time ministerial dignity this man moved about among his neighbors and the citizens of the town, inspiring them not only with respect and veneration, but some of them with awe.

It has been said that "the gentleman of the old school could not and would not be careless of the least thing that touched his personality. The cut of his clothes was an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. His linen must be spotless, his clothes dirtless, and his boots polished to very effulgence."

And what was true of gentlemen of the old school in general, was specially true of old school ministers. For "wherever he was, the old school minister never forgot his ministerial dignity." He wasn't a minister in the pulpit and a horse-jockey or a humorist in the street. If he made a joke, it was a stately well-weighted joke—conscientiously made—as by one who felt that he must give an account of every idle word, and did not mean for the sake of a roar of laughter to have the balance against him.

These "old divines walked the earth like noblemen—men who accepted deference as theirs by right"—men who "would rebuke the vulgar if they failed to show them the respect of an uncovered presence." And yet, these old school ministers, notwithstanding their vestment of frigid dignity, had great and tender hearts underneath; and when the fount was opened, as it often was, love flowed forth in a noble and generous stream. Of the old school ministers S. G. Goodrich, whom some of you remember as the "Peter Parley" of your childhood days, says: "In manners they were polite, and somewhat assiduous in their stately courtesies. They 'spoke with authority, and not as the scribes.' The minister of the gospel," Mr. Goodrich continues, "was a father, neighbor, friend, citizen—a man in a large and generous sense. Manliness meant godliness, and godliness manliness."

It seems but an easy and natural transition now to notice briefly the influence of the churches, at the head of which these

old school ministers presided as the oracles of God. To the church relations, then, of New England in the olden time, is to be ascribed, largely, I think, the cause of that which renders the people of this portion of the land so much more prosperous in all things that pertain to the highest civilization than appears anywhere else in the Republic. Judge Hoar, of Concord, very aptly remarked at the first centenary of the North Church and Society in Salem, in July, 1872, that he looked "sometimes with respect, sometimes with admiration, upon modern improvements." Said he: "I am a friend of Sunday schools, and I have no doubt but that they do good; but there is no Sunday school instruction that ever produces the effect upon the heart and mind of the child; that ever trains up such men and women; that ever gives such character and strength to the community, as does that attending church from early childhood, Sunday after Sunday, with father and mother, in those old square pews—better perhaps than the modern ones—under the eye of father and mother, and there acquiring the habit and feeling of reverence, before the understanding can catch the import of the long sermon; and the influence of these associations has been carried westward, and thus New England character and influence have been diffused across the continent."

I pass now to say a word of the successors of the first minister of this parish or town. Rev. Mr. Hull had been pastor of Episcopal churches in Reyham and Amesbury, this State, previously to his settlement as the pastor of this parish. He is represented as a gentleman of pleasing address and an acceptable preacher. His want of tact and judgment concerning business affairs, however, sometimes involved him in embarrassment and caused his friends to feel much anxiety on his behalf.

Rev. George Whitemore Stacy was, forty years ago, and still is, "an earnest preacher, a good worker and a most zealous reformer." This is the voluntary testimony of one of the elder members of the parish, who adds: "He is one of the best men that ever lived," to all which we who know him will sincerely subscribe.

Rev. J. T. Powers is a man of good natural endowments and of somewhat extensive general information, with not a little originality of thought, which enables him often to speak in the pulpit with much force. His labors in this town (at two different times) extend over a longer period than those of any other minister save Mr. Litchfield.

Rev. J. T. Smith—I am now quoting from the testimony of the parish—is a man of the strictest integrity; an untiring worker for his parish. He wellnigh earned his salary outside the pulpit in parochial labors among the people. To all which the first parish of Tyngsboro' can, I am sure, give their hearty confirmation.

Rev. Mr. Hervey occupied this pulpit for about two years, though I believe he was ecclesiastically connected with the Calvinist Baptist Church. Thus was presented the strange anomaly of a Calvinist Baptist minister officiating as acting pastor of a thoroughly liberal Christian society. It is said that he was a pleasant preacher, an amiable man, a Christian gentleman. It is believed that he felt, or knew, there is no difference between good men of all sects—that in all sects are to be found good as well as bad men.

It is possible that, though I have detained you so long with my imperfect narrative, there are some things which you expected I would say, but which you have not yet heard, and that I would omit some things which you have heard. Perhaps you listened for some person's name that has not yet fallen on your ear; that other names were more conspicuous in the course of our historic investigations than the case seemed to require. To all these possible hints I can but say that circumstances have not permitted me to make so extensive and critical, and therefore impartial a survey of the ground I have gone over as perhaps a larger opportunity would have enabled me to do. I have, however, intended to be accurate in statement, true in inference, and catholic or Christian in the treatment of the subject before me and in the accomplishment of the work required at my hands.

It but remains to be said, that your church and parish are not old, as age is reckoned in your mother-town, Concord; for the first parish in that town began its existence about one hundred and twenty-five years before your first church was erected, near the spot where we are assembled to-day. But the last one hundred and twenty years have wrought such changes as the most extravagant and fanciful dreamer could hardly have conjured up in the most fertile of human imaginations. When Timothy Wilkins donated the land for the first church in what was afterwards the town of Carlisle, the deed was given under the seal of George III. Since then, the few and feeble colonies have become a vast and mighty nation. And the Federal Union, originally composed of thirteen, has been multiplied into thirty-eight States of a consolidated Republic, while three millions of people have

increased to a population of forty millions. Since the rude church first began to echo with religious devotions, two civil wars have passed over *our* portion of the American Continent, through one of which a foreign chain that bound us was rent asunder, and by the other a domestic tyrant overthrown.

And then, what strides have been taken in the arts of peace, in the investigation and results of science, in accomplishing social changes and educational improvements, since the frame of that humble church was raised yonder. What a contrast between the pew behind the door, in the gallery of the church, for colored people, and the office of United States Marshal of the District of Columbia, filled by Frederick Douglass, or the president's chair in the United States Senate occupied, in committee of the whole, by the colored Senator from Mississippi, Mr. Bruce. Socially, the distance between these two events, our fathers would have said, is more than a thousand years. And so with God a thousand years are but as a day, and a day is as a thousand years.

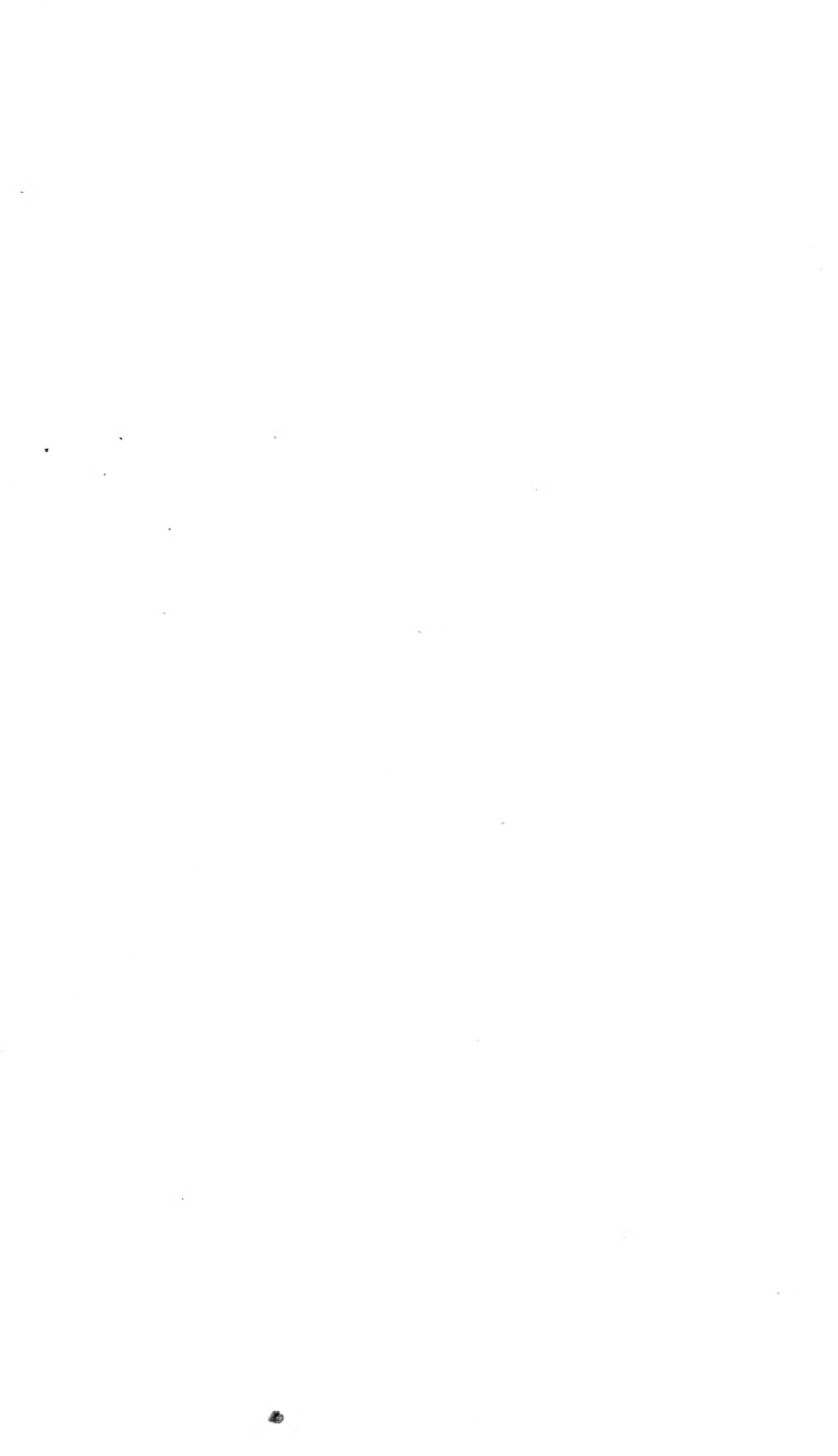
Nor have the changes in theology and religious thought been less wonderful and grateful. And no city or town, or village in the land has been left utterly untouched by their influence. Yours is no exception. The spirit of fraternal regard flows back and forth from those who, though they can not yet fully clasp hands on speculative points of doctrine, do join hearts in the principle of a sincere and devout love towards God and man.

Has not the time, therefore, wellnigh arrived when, as at the beginning, the old Congregational Church and Society of Carlisle may embrace within its ample fold all the people, leaving each one according to the ancient Congregationalism of Massachusetts, to think and write his or her own thoughts, since this form of Congregationalism set sincerity of belief and Christian discipleship above all forms of confession?

My work is finished. I leave it with the prayer that God may bless it to the good of the people of this parish and town.







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